

JUDICIAL BRANCH

FY2022 Budget Priorities and Building Block Information

Ongoing and *one-time* funding requests as established by the Judicial Council (listed in order of priority)

* = funded during 2020 session, and then reversed in June special session

#1: Technology Investment	ONGOING	ONE-TIME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT Developers • \$650,000 * Online Court Assistance Program (OCAP) • \$210,000 * Cybersecurity Infrastructure • \$450,000 Rural Courthouse Bandwidth Increases • \$25,000 Webex Licensing • \$45,000 Microsoft Licensing • \$72,000 * 	\$1,452,000	
#2: Public Outreach & Education Coordinator	\$120,000	
#3: Public Safety Out-of-State Criminal History Review	\$220,500	
#4: Court Commissioners – Recruit & Retain	\$92,500 *	
#5: Judicial Administration Certificate Program	\$50,000	\$10,000
	\$1,935,000	\$10,000

BUDGET PRIORITY SUMMARIES

#1: Technology Investment — \$1,452,000

\$650,000 * — IT Developers

PURPOSE • **increase IT staff by six** to support continued development of Utah's court IT infrastructure •

The number of core technology applications needed to serve the public and support the courts has more than doubled (from 6 to 13) in the last 10 years. Yet ongoing resources for developing and staffing these increased electronic services have remained virtually unchanged.

\$210,000 * — Online Court Assistance Program (OCAP)

PURPOSE • **hire two dedicated OCAP technical support staff** •

For many individuals, OCAP is the only method for them to prepare documents to file or respond in a court case. OCAP is a simple to use, but complex to design, computer system that assists self-represented parties and others to generate necessary legal forms. The current system cannot reliably meet existing or future demand. OCAP requires maintenance and technical support to ensure the software reflects current Utah Code and court rules, security best-practices, and to expand OCAP to additional case types so that more people can benefit from the service.

\$450,000 — Cybersecurity Infrastructure

PURPOSE • **maintain a robust cybersecurity platform** •

In recent years, the Judicial Council has been able to address cyber security issues with one-time carryforward funding. With the 2020 budget reductions, that funding is no longer available. In May 2022, the courts' current cybersecurity software will term out and will need to be converted to ongoing funding to maintain existing protections.

\$25,000 — Rural Court Location Bandwidth Increases

PURPOSE • **provide parties, attorneys, judges, and court staff with sufficient bandwidth at rural courthouses** •

In rural Utah, internet bandwidth is often limited. Many rural courthouses are currently forced to operate with internet speeds that are far slower than the speeds that even residential consumers commonly access along the Wasatch

Front. In our current technology-based legal landscape where web-based video is often used for official court business, insufficient bandwidth artificially constrains what can be accomplished in these courthouses, limiting efficiency for patrons and the courts that serve them.

\$45,000 — *Webex Licensing*

PURPOSE • **continued access to remote meeting software for court hearings** •

As part of the courts' 2020 pandemic response, court hearings moved online. This required an investment in software licensing, which was paid for one-time with 2020 CARES Act funding. Remote court hearings are proving to be advantageous for parties and attorneys for many hearing types. The courts anticipate these types of remote hearings will continue post-pandemic.

\$72,000 * — *Microsoft Licensing*

PURPOSE • **upgrade outdated Microsoft software** •

The courts rely on Microsoft Office products as the standard for documents in the legal field. Currently, more than 1500 court computers use MS Office 2010, which is no longer supported by Microsoft (as of October 2020), leaving users without security updates and opening the courts to increased risk of cyberattacks.

#2: Public Outreach & Education Coordinator — \$120,000

PURPOSE • **to establish consistent, sustainable bridges with marginalized communities** •

This coordinator would provide critical support for public outreach and education in all of Utah's communities, with a special focus on those communities that have expressed perceived bias due to race and gender. Purposeful and targeted education about the courts and available services will increase public trust and confidence in the courts.

#3: Public Safety Out-of-State Criminal History Review — \$220,500

PURPOSE • **provide judges with more criminal history information when making release decisions** •

Judges have been using the Public Safety Assessment (PSA) for more than two years to assist in making release decisions when an individual has been arrested. Part of the PSA provides information to a judge regarding an individual's criminal history. Currently, if an individual has any out-of-state criminal history, a PSA is not able to be provided to the judge. This request seeks ongoing funding to improve the PSA creation process by adding a manual review of an individual's out-of-state criminal history information (if any). Data shows that by adding this manual review to the process, judges will receive a PSA in 30% more cases (bringing the statewide total to over 90%).

#4: Court Commissioners – Recruit & Retain — \$92,500 *

PURPOSE • **retain experienced commissioners and recruit the highest quality candidates** •

Court commissioners are quasi-judicial officers assigned to domestic cases, including divorce, child custody/support, and protective orders. The courts have experienced turnover and difficulty recruiting qualified applicants. Most court commissioners can make significantly more in the private sector. This would increase current salary by 6.4%.

#5: Judicial Administration Certificate Program — \$50,000 + \$10,000 one-time

PURPOSE • **provide professional development to address future judicial administrator knowledge and skills** •

This is an investment in future judicial administrative leadership. This funding would be used to provide a path for professional development to specifically address the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to enhance the career growth of judicial administrators. As a pilot program, it is anticipated that instruction would begin in August 2021 with an enrollment cohort of 15 students.

For any questions regarding these budget priorities, please contact **Michael Drechsel**, Assistant State Court Administrator / Legislative Liaison: (435) 621-8737 or michaelcd@utcourts.gov

